

COMMONWEALTH NURSES FEDERATION



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INTRODUCTION

The Commonwealth Nurses Federation (CNF) is a strong, credible and participatory grouping of national nurses associations from Commonwealth countries. As one of the most active Commonwealth professional associations the CNF aims to influence health policy, develop nursing networks, improve nursing standards and strengthen nursing leadership throughout the Commonwealth.

MEMBERSHIP

The CNF was delighted to welcome the Samoa Nurses Association and the Sierra Leone Nurses Association back into active membership after long absences. The New Zealand Nurses Organisation resumed membership of the CNF with effect from October 2002.

GOVERNING BOARD

Elections in March 2003 for two regional Board members' positions produced the following results:

Europe – Ms Corinne Scicluna (Malta), elected to replace Professor Dame Betty Kershaw (UK)
South Asia – Mrs Saramma Samuel (India), elected for a second term.

These members will serve from July 2003 to June 2007. Professor Kershaw is thanked for her excellent service to the Federation during her term of office.

BOARD MEMBERS

Mrs Reena Bose, President of the CNF, attended the following:

- celebrations marking the 60th anniversary of the Sri Lanka Nurses Association in May 2003
- the International Council of Nurses (ICN) Conference in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2003 on "Building Excellence through Evidence"
- the ICN Council of National Representatives Meeting in Geneva, Switzerland in June 2003 (as an observer).

Mrs Alumita Bulicokocoko, Board Member for the Pacific region, attended the South Pacific Nurses Forum in Port Vila, Vanuatu, in August 2002, making a presentation on the work and objectives of the CNF.

OFFICERS

The Executive Secretary, Mr Michael Stubbings, represented the CNF at various meetings in the UK during the year, including ten meetings of the Para 55 Group (see below) and three informal meetings of Commonwealth health professional associations. He also represented the CNF at the following international meetings:

- NGO Consultation on Links between the Official and Non-Governmental Commonwealth, London, November 2002

- Commonwealth Health Ministers Pre-WHA Meeting, Geneva, Switzerland, May 2003.

The Executive Secretary attended an Observance for Commonwealth Day at Westminster Abbey on 10 March 2003. On the same evening he also attended a reception at Marlborough House, London with his wife and was introduced to Her Majesty the Queen.

COMMONWEALTH STEERING COMMITTEE FOR NURSING AND MIDWIFERY

The CNF continued to be involved in the work of the Steering Committee. The Committee has no regular funding or staff resources and functions principally through the good offices of Committee members with the support of their employing organisations. The work programme of the Committee includes the provision of guidance on key issues and the holding of workshops.

A workshop was held in Calcutta, India at the end of September 2002 on the theme ***Combating HIV/AIDS: the contribution of nurses and midwives***. The President, Mrs Reena Bose, was heavily involved in this workshop and made a key presentation on the HIV/AIDS scenario in South Asia (see also Regional Activities below). The Executive Secretary was also very involved in arrangements for a further workshop on human resources issues due to be held in Christchurch, New Zealand in July 2003.

In December 2002 the Committee issued Guidance on the Psychosocial Aspects of Caring for Those Affected by HIV/AIDS. This comprised training and resource materials.

CODE OF PRACTICE FOR INTERNATIONAL RECRUITMENT OF HEALTH WORKERS

In September 2002 the CNF received a draft Companion Document to the Code of Practice from the Commonwealth Secretariat for circulation to member associations. In view of the short timescale for comment the draft was only sent to those associations with email facilities. The Secretariat asked for comments to be submitted through Health Ministers. However, the Executive Secretary sent a letter to the Commonwealth Secretariat containing a number of general and editorial points. The Companion Document was formally adopted at the pre-WHA Meeting of Commonwealth Health Ministers in May 2003. Publication of the Code of Practice and the Companion Document is awaited.

PRE-WHA MEETING OF COMMONWEALTH HEALTH MINISTERS

At the meeting in May 2002 it was agreed that triennial meetings of Health Ministers would be discontinued and that future meetings of Health Ministers would consist of the annual May meetings only. The Commonwealth Secretariat circulated a draft paper on the proposed format for these meetings and this was sent to the Board in October. The CNF sent comments to the Secretariat. Notable points from the proposals were that there would be roundtable sessions at the meetings in which NGOs would be able to participate and that the Commonwealth Health Development Programme Steering Group would be renamed and have more influence on the course of the meetings.

At the meeting in May 2003 Ministers considered human resources for health (including the Code of Practice item above), women's health, the Commonwealth forum on globalisation and health and HIV/AIDS. The CNF delegation comprised Mrs Caroline Hyde-Price (Royal College of Nursing, UK), Mr Simone Racolo (Fiji Nursing Association) and the Executive Secretary. There were also roundtable sessions on adolescent health, domestic violence and tobacco. The CNF delegates participated actively in these sessions.

PARA55 GROUP

This Group, which consists principally of NGOs, promotes and monitors the implementation of actions of Governments relating to paragraph 55 of the Commonwealth Heads of Governments' Durban Communique, 1999 concerning HIV/AIDS. It supports the implementation of a multi-sectoral approach to combating HIV/AIDS in Commonwealth countries. The Executive Secretary represented the CNF at meetings during the year.

Activities of the Group during the year included:

- convening conferences and expert meetings

- petitioning Commonwealth Finance and Health Ministers
- publishing the Report of an Expert Consultation on HIV/AIDS – Mother-to-Child Transmission and Breastfeeding
- running an active website
- considering instituting a project in Ghana on the extent to which a multi-sectoral approach is being implemented, with an emphasis on “human capacity development”.

The work and funding of the Group are currently under review.

COMMONWEALTH FELLOWSHIP

There was no Fellowship Scheme this year as the Commonwealth Foundation’s Board of Governors decided to carry out a review of the arrangements. The review included focus group discussions in Fiji, Kenya, New Zealand, Sri Lanka and Trinidad and Tobago and the CNF, on invitation, provided details of member associations in those countries to facilitate participation in the groups. The Executive Secretary attended a further review meeting in London in March 2003. The outcome of the review is awaited.

FINANCE

The Commonwealth Foundation again gave considerable support to the CNF, which is gratefully acknowledged. This comprised two elements - a core grant of £13,000 towards the CNF’s basic operating costs and £6,000 to assist the attendance of nurses and midwives at two workshops. These were the CNF/ECSACON Workshop on HIV/AIDS held in Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania in August 2002 and the Commonwealth Steering Committee/CNF Workshop in Calcutta, India at the end of September 2002.

Subscription income for the year totalled £8,372. Subscription rates remained unchanged.

At the last Biennial Meeting it was agreed that the CNF should set aside £1,000 annually as a Contingency Fund for use on application by member associations in emergency situations having a direct bearing on peoples’ health. Criteria for the Fund were drawn up and approved by the Board. The Fund was introduced for the year commencing 1 October 2002.

REGIONAL ACTIVITIES

A highly successful Workshop organised by the CNF and ECSACON in partnership was held at the Golden Tulip Hotel, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania on 4-5 August 2002. The theme of the Workshop was ***Strengthening the nursing and midwifery contribution towards prevention, treatment, care and support in the management of HIV/AIDS, STIs, and TB.*** Over 40 delegates attended. The Workshop took place prior to ECSACON’s Scientific Conference and Quadrennial Meeting.

Mrs Reena Bose, President of the CNF, presented papers on the Commonwealth Steering Committee for Nursing and Midwifery’s Action on HIV/AIDS and the CNF perspective on HIV/AIDS including the work of the Para55 Group. Recommendations from the Workshop covered education and training matters, caring for carers, conducting and sharing of research, use of traditional foods and greater utilisation of the home based care kit.

A very productive Workshop for nurses and midwives was held in Calcutta, India on 30 September/1 October 2002. The Workshop, which was organised by the Commonwealth Steering Committee for Nursing and Midwifery in conjunction with the CNF, had the theme ***Combating HIV/AIDS: the contribution of nurses and midwives.*** Mrs Reena Bose made a key presentation at the Workshop on the HIV/AIDS scenario in the region and the problems faced.

It was recommended that delegates should implement the lessons learnt at the Workshop, take leadership roles and be committed to bringing about change. Delegates were provided with action plan forms, which they were requested to use to record lessons learnt and the actions they proposed to take on their return home.

Arrangements were put in hand for a further Steering Committee/CNF Workshop in Christchurch, New Zealand in July 2003 on human resources issues as they affect nurse and midwives.

CNF WEBSITE

The CNF website was opened in October 2002 following hard work by the Executive Secretary and consultant Gail Scothern. The address is www.commonwealthnurses.org

The development of a website was approved at the Biennial Meeting in June 2001. At present the website has pages covering About the CNF, the CNF Board and Officers, News, Commonwealth Day, the Newsletter, the Conference Calendar and Publications.

PUBLICATIONS

The following publications were produced and distributed during the year:

1. Issues 29 and 30 of the CNF Newsletter.
2. **Strengthening the nursing and midwifery contribution towards prevention, treatment, care and support in the management of HIV/AIDS, STIs, and TB.** Report of workshop, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, August 2002.

BIENNIAL MEETING

The Biennial Meeting and Workshop was held at the Commonwealth Institute in London on 24/25 June. The theme of the Workshop was *The healthy way: nurses and midwives as advisers and educators*. A Board Meeting was held on 22/23 June.

The main decisions made at the Biennial Meeting were as follows:

- that the CNF should make a “once only” offer to associations significantly in arrears with subscriptions to waive their arrears subject to payment of subscriptions outstanding for 2002/03 and subscriptions for subsequent years as they become due.
- that the CNF would need to respond fully to the expected consultation by the Commonwealth Foundation on funding policy.
- that the CNF should seek representatives annually from member associations to attend the Pre-WHA Meetings of Commonwealth Health Ministers as part of the CNF delegation.
- that national nurses associations should put pressure on governments to make provision for nurses on national delegations to those meetings.
- that the CNF’s Strategic Directions (2000-2005) should be reviewed and revised at the next Board Meeting in 2005.
- that the operation of the emergency contingency fund set up for member associations for use in situations having a direct bearing on peoples’ health should be reviewed at the next Board Meeting.
- that the next issue of the CNF Directory of Commonwealth Nursing and Midwifery Associations and Chief Nursing Officers should be placed on the CNF Website.
- that the CNF and the West African College of Nursing should organise a joint workshop on HIV/AIDS in West Africa in 2004/05.

July 2003